

Donkey' Day. 28th March, 2021, Palm Sunday.

Nothing special about today, I thought - same old, same old. At least it's my day off, I thought, and I've got my baby with me, so we can have a peaceful day together and munch some of that cool grass under the trees over there, and my master has left a nice big bucket of water to drink from.

Well, that's how it started, then these two men I'd never seen before - dusty looking characters - rolled into the yard looking for my master. When they met him they said that 'The Lord' needed me and my foal, and d'you know what? Without asking them who, what or

why - he just said, "OK, bring them back safe mind," and then off we went!

I don't mind telling you I wasn't too pleased, as that was not the way I had planned my day, and my little foal had barely finished feeding from me - but the two men were kind and didn't beat us, so we trotted along.

Not far ahead, after we had gone about a mile, we met up with some other men who seemed quite excited about something, and were doing what one of them instructed. He seemed to be their leader. Anyway, it looked like he wanted a ride as the men started throwing their cloaks onto us with a couple of blankets, and

this guy that they called 'Teacher' got up on my back. He wasn't a huge fella and he looked pretty young and fit, so I wondered why he needed a ride - but I couldn't ask him. I had never had a person ride me before, so this was a new experience for me.

He was lighter than I thought he'd be, so it wasn't a strain for me, and I've had to carry loads more weight than that in my life. I don't think my foal could have managed him, but she was given some food bags and wine skins to carry.

As we set off down the dry and dusty road my hooves cracked off the sharp stones, so I

tried to avoid them. After a while I was aware that we were going into a big town - and I mean BIG! I'd never been anywhere like it before. And people started to mill around us.

A few at first, then more and more, and they were singing - apparently happy to see the man who was riding on my back. They threw palm branches down on the road in front of me, which I liked because it softened the hardness of the stony ground.

Although it was a hot day and there seemed to be hundreds of people around us, the man on my back was quite calm and that reassured me, so I was content to walk on to wherever he needed me to go.

Eventually, we stopped at the Temple and the man got off my back. I sensed that he was a special person because of all the singing and shouting and palm branches, but that all stopped when we got to the Temple and he got down.

He didn't say anything - he just looked around at all the people who had gone quiet now. I had never known a person who could hold attention like this man - without saying even a word.

Then he turned from the silent crowd and took the blanket and cloaks off my back and gave them back to the two men who had collected

me. He held my face in his hands; they were strong and warm, and he looked straight into my eyes. He lowered himself until he was level with my head and rubbed my nose gently.

"Thank you, Donkey," he said, "look after that beautiful foal of yours."

I could feel his breath on my face and all of a sudden I felt overwhelmed by a sense of love and contentment, as I had felt when I had just given birth to my foal. I felt as though he had wrapped me in his arms - even though he was only holding my head, so I nuzzled into his chest.

I never saw him again, but there was one thing that I remember about him that occasionally

comes to me in the middle of the night; when he looked at me, he had the kindest and saddest eyes I have ever seen. Of course, that was all some years ago now, but I sometimes wonder what happened to him and where he is now, because in the strangest way, I seem to sense he's still around.